

Nerve Root Injections

A nerve root injection assists in determining which nerve root is responsible for your leg or arm pain and may be used in an attempt to decrease the pain from an inflamed nerve.

What happens during the nerve root injection procedure?

Prior to the injection, you will be asked to rate your pain on a scale of 0–10, 10 being the worst pain you've experienced.

Using fluoroscopy (X-ray guidance), a small needle is placed into the nerve root sheath (which is the layer of tissue that surrounds the nerve). Once the needle approaches the root, you will experience immediate discomfort. It is imperative that you tell us as soon as you feel the discomfort.

Next, your doctor will inject a small amount of material to verify correct placement of the needle. Once the accuracy of the placement is confirmed, a local anesthetic is injected. You should then experience relief from the discomfort. It is important for you to communicate to your doctor when relief is felt. At the time the anesthetic provides pain relief, once again observe where on the pain scale of 0–10 you identify your present symptoms.

What should I expect after a nerve root injection?

Be aware that the anesthetic will take several hours to wear off. **It is imperative that you have someone to drive you home**, as you may experience some temporary loss of sensation and may find your motor coordination a bit awkward or weak. Otherwise, you may resume your regular activities the following day.

What are the risks associated with nerve root injections?

Like all injections, there is a very small risk of bleeding, infection, or allergic reaction. You will be asked to report any allergies at the time your injection is scheduled. This information is necessary for your doctor to know in advance. Substitutions or modifications to the medications may be necessary.

The steroid medication can cause a temporary increase in blood sugar levels. If you are diabetic, you'll need to monitor your glucose levels more frequently for 4–5 days following the injection.

On rare occasions, there may be other complications. If you have concerns, you should discuss them with your doctor. You may call (404) 778-7000 if you have any questions.